

# HOT TOPICS

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CURRENT ISSUES FOR ARMY LEADERS

## Making Safety Personal



**Statistics: The Sad Truth**  
***Five Steps of Risk Management***  
**Behind the Wheel**

"SAFETY" has become an unpopular word among many of our Soldiers. They often view safety as a constraint rather than a combat multiplier for mission accomplishment. It slows them down, doesn't allow them to train on the razor's edge, or there just isn't time for it, they say.

We must turn this around. We must make time to teach junior leaders how to conduct solid risk management. Often we give them one or two hours of classroom instruction, then expect them to mitigate risks for such major activities as convoy operations in Iraq. How can we ask our junior leaders to understand and use risk management if we don't give them the skills to do so? Simply put, we can't.

The crux of the Army Safety Campaign is to cause a cultural change in the way our Soldiers conduct risk management through inspiration and empowerment. We are using Web-based technology to empower junior leaders and Soldiers with the knowledge to conduct better risk management. Squad or platoon leaders now can access a variety of tools online to help them do predictive analysis and prevent the most-likely accidents *before* they happen.

I encourage you to be part of the Army Safety Campaign. Inspire the Soldiers in your unit to do the same. It could help your unit predict and prevent that next accident. Remember, tools are effective only if they are accompanied with rigidly enforced standards and discipline. Enforcing standards might be uncomfortable, but they can keep Soldiers safe.

Our Army is at war. Be safe so you can make it home!

**BG Joseph A. Smith**  
Director,  
U.S. Army Safety



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Editor in Chief LTC ROBERT ALI

Special Products Editor BETH REECE

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# Lives in Leaders' Hands

LAST year's accidental death rate was the highest in 10 years. Over 55 percent of those deaths involved private automobiles and motorcycles — and nearly all were preventable, had vehicle operators taken proper precautions.

In January, Acting Secretary of the Army R.L. Brownlee initiated the “Be Safe!” campaign. He directed leaders and junior Soldiers alike to cut the number of accidental deaths in half by fiscal year 2005.

We must get busy. In the first five months of this fiscal year, 107 Soldiers had already died in accidents. Our goal to significantly reduce deaths and accidents affects everything the Army does. And it requires everyone's commitment — from senior leaders to individual Soldiers.

*“No one cares until it's personal. ‘Safety’ is just another word unless it knocks at your door.” — Mississippi State Patrol Capt. Pete Collins*

# Statistics: The Sad Truth

THREE Soldiers die when their vehicle runs off a highway overpass and crashes into the roadway below. Another suffers fatal injuries when her vehicle collides head-on with another vehicle. Still another dies when his vehicle runs off the roadway, becomes airborne and hits an embankment.

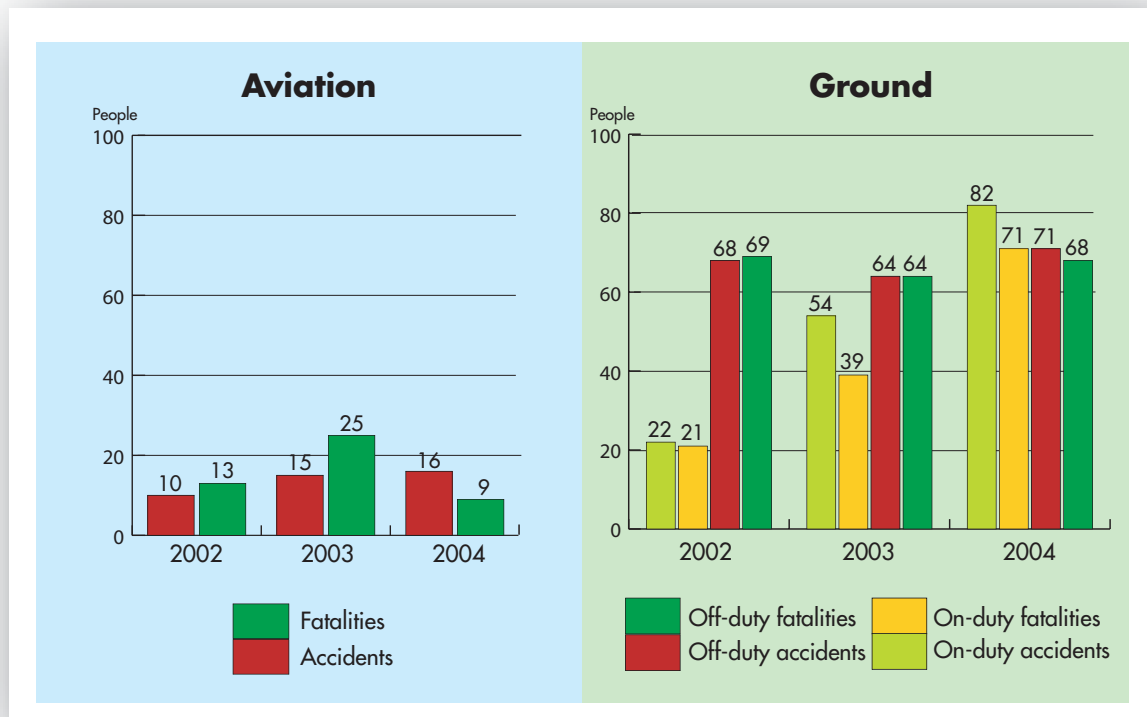
These statistics are real. Despite high risks sometimes considered inherent in military duty, Soldiers are less likely to be killed in actual operations than in off-duty activities. More Soldiers die in privately owned vehicle accidents than in any other category of accident. On average, the Army loses one soldier every three days to POV accidents.

Most of our accidents, on the battlefield and at home, involve human error. These accidents kill more

Soldiers and wreck more equipment than wartime enemies do. One out of every five American Soldiers killed in World War II died as a result of an accident. During the Korean War, more than half of the Army personnel who were hospitalized were injured in accidents. And in Vietnam, accidents killed 5,700 Soldiers, disabled more than 106,000 others and produced nearly 5 million nondisabling injuries.

Information and task overload hint at the challenges our Soldiers bear in today's fast-paced environment. Resources, weather, experience and continued deployments are other challenges. Our reluctance to say "no" may also contribute to risks, along with Soldiers' tendency to carry the load alone instead of asking for help when it's needed.

## The Rising Numbers



2004 statistics are from Oct. 1 through April 28.



# A Leader's Responsibility

ARMY Field Manual 100-14, "Risk Management," dictates that every leader and commander is responsible for protecting Soldiers from unnecessary risks. That responsibility applies to all Army missions, including mission security; morale and welfare; prevention of injuries before, during and after deployments; and avoidance of "friendly fire."

Fulfilling that obligation requires knowledge and experience — and some help. The U.S. Army Safety Center adopted the risk-management process to help leaders identify hazards and make informed decisions to control those hazards. While leaders are good at naming and recognizing hazards, safety officials say leaders often fail to implement controls needed to eliminate or decrease risks.

Choosing ways to mitigate risk is one of leaders' most critical and consequential roles. It starts with discipline, team coordination, by-the-book maintenance and enforced standards.

Leaders are responsible for assessing their opera-

tions as total systems. They must ensure that risk-management decisions match missions and that control measures reduce the risks to levels that support their commanders' guidance.

The degree of risk determines the level of authority at which a decision is made to accept the risk. When resources to control high-risk areas are not available, the issue must be elevated to the next-higher command. The process continues until it reaches a level of command at which hazards can be eliminated or controlled. In this manner, a conscious and informed decision can be made to acquire and commit the resources to control hazards or accept risks.

**Soldiers' well-being must be every leader's priority, even if that means double-checking work and reminding Soldiers of the standards they were taught just a week earlier. It might also mean pushing Soldiers to think and act maturely.**

## Build Your Own Safety Briefing

A new, interactive tool is now available to assist commanders in the development of safety briefings. This tool takes users through the steps of developing individualized briefings, using the risk-management process as a guide. Each step in the process provides links to background information so commanders can access supporting material and tailor briefings to their individual units. To use the tool, go to <https://safety.army.mil> and click on "Commander's Safety Brief."



# 5 Steps of Risk Management

**Identify hazards** — Identify hazards to people, property and mission. Consider all aspects of current and future situations, as well as historical problem areas. Remember that conditions can change quickly, requiring constant vigilance. The enemy is normally an obvious hazard.

Consider also the:

- complexity and difficulty of the mission;
- terrain and environment;
- weather and visibility;
- equipment;
- time available for execution; and
- supervision, experience, training, morale and endurance of the troops.

**Assess hazards** — Determine the potential loss and cost that could result from the identified hazards, based on their probability and severity. Probability determines the likelihood that the hazard may cause a problem. Severity asks: “How bad could it be?” Hazards are measured by risk categories: extremely high, high, moderate and low.

**Develop controls and make a risk decision** — Develop courses of action that eliminate hazards or reduce risks. Controls may range from hazard alerts and physical warning signs to issuing protective clothing or avoiding the hazard area altogether. After establishing controls, leaders should re-evaluate the hazards to check for residual risk and to ensure risks are reduced to the level at which benefits outweigh potential costs. Leaders should include their chains of command if the level of risk exceeds their commanders’ guidance or if necessary controls significantly reduce the chance of mission success. This step demands analysis and judgment.

**Implement controls** — Put into place controls that eliminate hazards or reduce their risks. This may be done through verbal or written orders, standard operating procedures, performance standards, safety briefings and rehearsals. Ensure unit members clearly understand the controls.

**Supervise and evaluate** — Enforce the controls and evaluate Soldiers’ understanding of the standards. Adjust and update as necessary.

## Risk-Management Terms

**Hazard** — Any existing or potential condition that can cause injury, illness or death; damage to, or loss of equipment and property; or degradation of the mission.

**Risk** — The chance of hazards or bad consequences; exposure to injury or loss. The risk level is expressed in terms of hazard probability and severity.

**Probability** — The likelihood that an event will occur.

- Frequent — Occurs often.
- Likely — Occurs several times.
- Occasional — Occurs sporadically.
- Seldom — Unlikely, but could occur.
- Unlikely — Probably won’t occur.

**Severity** — The expected result of an event (degree of injury, property damage or other mission-impairing factors).

- Catastrophic — Death or permanent total disability, major security failure, major equipment or system damage, severe environmental damage, mission failure.
- Critical — Permanent partial disability, temporary total disability in excess of three months, significant equipment or system damage, significant mission degradation or environmental damage, considerable security failure.
- Marginal — Minor injury, lost workdays, minor equipment or system damage, some mission degradation or environment change.
- Negligible — First aid or minor medical treatment; minor equipment or system impairment; little or no impact in mission accomplishment or the environment.

**Exposure** — The frequency and length of time Soldiers, equipment and missions are subjected to a hazard.

**Controls** — Actions taken to eliminate or reduce risks.

**Risk assessment** — The identification and assessment of hazards.

**Residual Risk** — The level of risk remaining after controls have been implemented. Controls are altered until the residual risk is at an acceptable level or until it cannot practically be reduced further.



# Profile of a Safety-conscious Leader

COMMANDERS should have strong management abilities, specific safety goals and extensive technical backgrounds in their areas of responsibility. Safety-conscious leaders know the common causes of accidents and which Soldiers have high accident-risk factors. They give on-the-spot corrections, and do not tolerate below-standard performance.

Leaders who make safety a priority teach their Soldiers to keep maintenance manuals current and easily accessible. No matter the mission or the environment, they do not accept excuses for ignoring routine maintenance. Leaders also establish training standards and afford time for hands-on practice. Quality is never sacrificed for quantity.

## The Rules

- ▶ **Accept no unnecessary risks.** Leaders with authority to accept risk have the responsibility to protect their Soldiers from unnecessary risks. An unnecessary risk is one that, if reduced or eliminated, still allows mission accomplishment.
- ▶ **Make risk decisions at the proper level.** Risk decisions should be made at the level consistent with commanders' guidance. The leader responsible for the mission should make risk decisions, seeking the advice of the next-higher command if resources to control the hazards are unavailable.
- ▶ **Accept the risks only if benefits outweigh the costs.** Leaders must occasionally accept necessary risks to accomplish missions. They must also understand that risk-taking requires a decision-making process that balances mission benefits with costs.

## Potential Hazards

WHEN identifying hazards and assessing risk, look for:

- Shortcomings in personnel, intelligence and logistical support;
- Lack of clear standards or no standards at all;
- Lack of or outdated training;
- Poor leadership;
- Lack of self-discipline; and
- Lack of appropriate resources.





# Safety: Make it Personal

CHANGE has so long been a part of Army business that we spend a lot of time just keeping up with the pace. Doing anything, anywhere, anytime, at any cost has become our cultural mindset. Sometimes we get so caught up in what we have to do that we forget about what we should do.

By embracing risk management, we invest in readiness. More than ever before, our missions demand exact planning. With proactive leadership and teamwork, risk management can make our jobs easier and missions more successful.


The following steps can help make risk management an intuitive part of everything Soldiers do.

- ❶ Incorporate safety into everything the organization does: mission planning, preparation and execution.
- ❷ Clearly articulate risk-management policies and goals, even if they are already expressed in standard operating procedures.
- ❸ Remember that failure to impose standards gives way to low standards that could result in accidents.
- ❹ Teach all leaders and supervisors to regard the healthy lives of Soldiers as a prerequisite to successful mission accomplishment.
- ❺ Hold brainstorming sessions for junior leaders to identify potential hazards and risks. Include everything from degradation of job specialty skills and macho attitudes to time constraints.
- ❻ Adopt the buddy system to enforce water consumption, healthy eating, personal hygiene and rest. Monitor sickness, heat and cold injuries, and drinking and driving.





- ❖ Remember that overloading Soldiers physically, mentally and emotionally can interfere with mission accomplishment.
- ❖ Use a chronological sequence when identifying hazards and assessing their risks. For example, consider all aspects of moving into a training site: road conditions, length of trip, weather, vehicle condition, driver experience, driver rest, day versus night driving, speed limits, cargo, congested areas, fuel points and supervision.
- ❖ Continually re-evaluate hazards and their risks as mission and conditions change.
- ❖ Assure supervisors and managers that the commander's council may be sought as needed.
- ❖ Examine how subordinates manage risk, and offer suggestions for improvement.
- ❖ Review SOPs to ensure safety is built in.
- ❖ Emphasize caution in driving, equipment maintenance and weapons handling.
- ❖ Ensure that Soldiers are qualified and licensed to operate the vehicles and equipment they use.
- ❖ Ensure that personal protective clothing and equipment is inventoried, serviceable and available.
- ❖ Give seasonal safety briefings to remind Soldiers about holiday- or weather-related hazards.
- ❖ Teach Soldiers to make on-the-spot decisions in emergency situations that require immediate attention.
- ❖ Ensure that accident-reporting requirements and procedures are understood.
- ❖ Teach Soldiers to be aware of their own limitations, as well as those of their units and leaders.
- ❖ Help subordinates learn from their mistakes.
- ❖ Resist the temptation to take shortcuts.
- ❖ Utilize the expertise of safety specialists assigned to the unit or installation.
- ❖ Make safety references easily accessible.



# Behind the Wheel

MOST accident fatalities occur while Soldiers are driving their own cars. Such deaths are needless, and they're preventable when leaders encourage safe driving habits and set examples of self-discipline and patience.

Leaders must set unmistakable standards that reflect traffic laws and require mandatory use of seatbelts and motorcycle safety equipment. Leaders must also educate Soldiers on the most common factors in vehicle accidents — speed, fatigue and alcohol abuse.

Because 86 percent of Soldiers involved in vehicle accidents are between the ages of 18 and 24, POV safety classes should target younger, less-experienced drivers. POV safety inspections and random roadside checks can also help.

A Soldier's behavior can sometimes signal an increased risk of having an accident. Such negative behaviors as traffic offenses, alcohol abuse, misconduct and poor performance can often indicate that a Soldier is a potential POV-accident victim. Leaders must



identify at-risk Soldiers, counsel them, then encourage them to change risky behaviors.

Junior and noncommissioned officers see their Soldiers every day. They should know where their Soldiers go and what they do in order to assert positive influence on how, when and where their Soldiers operate POVs.

Leaders can also eliminate the risks Soldiers take by providing alternatives to driving POVs and by creating incentives that will keep Soldiers off the highway during weekends. Schedule activities on post. Establish liberal operating hours for gyms, recreation centers and other places that Soldiers use after duty hours. Use similar measures to provide alternatives to alcohol use, and post public-transportation schedules in prominent places.

Following every POV accident, commanders should conduct an assessment of the accident with members of the Soldier's chain of command. Determine what happened, why it happened and how it could have been prevented. Implement preventive measures and publicize lessons learned.

### Tools

Tools to help leaders reduce POV accidents include the Click It or Ticket Program, the Army Safety Management Information System-1, the POV Risk-Management Toolbox and Combating Aggressive Driving training.

ASMIS-1 is an automated, question-and-answer tool that helps Soldiers assess potential risks for road trips. It factors in such elements as the type of vehicle, the planned route, alternate drivers, seatbelt use, sleep, rest stops, weather conditions and time of departure. ASMIS-1 gives users a hazard-assessment score, then recommends measures Soldiers can take to minimize risks. The tool is located at <https://safety.army.mil/asmis1>.

The Installation Management Agency provides Combating Aggressive Driving training at select locations. The program teaches Soldiers to recognize and react to aggressive driving.

The Safety Center has also released "Making Safety Personal," a video co-produced with General Motors Corporation. It features retired Mississippi State Patrol Capt. Pete Collins speaking about the personal impact of unsafe driving, relating experiences from some of the 184 fatal accidents he has investigated.

Leaders may also use the Safety Center's POV Risk-Management Toolbox, 3rd edition, available at <https://safety.army.mil>. The toolbox contains driving scenarios, risk factors and slides to use while presenting safe-driving classes to Soldiers.



- ❶ Keep your eyes on the road. Avoid cell-phone use, or use a hands-free phone.
- ❷ Don't try to retrieve objects that have fallen to the floor.
- ❸ Avoid eating and drinking while driving.
- ❹ Designate the front-seat passenger as navigator.
- ❺ Take a break if you find yourself lost in thought, forgetting the last few miles, tailgating, drifting from lane to lane or hitting rumble strips.
- ❻ Avoid stressful or confrontational conversation.
- ❼ Program your favorite radio stations and arrange tapes and CDs in an accessible spot.
- ❽ Teach children the importance of good behavior while in the car.
- ❾ Slow down at night and drive within the range of your headlights — about 500 feet on the lights on high beam and 350 feet on low beam.
- ❿ Pay attention at intersections, as over 42 percent of fatalities involve failure to yield the right of way, passing a stop sign or disregarding signals.
- ⓫ Coffee and other caffeine sources can promote short-term alertness, but remember that it takes about 30 minutes for caffeine to enter the bloodstream.

**A Soldier dies in a POV accident every 72 hours.**



# Motorcycle Safety

MORE than 4 million motorcycles are registered in the United States, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The motorcycle's popularity can be attributed to its low initial cost, its use as a pleasure vehicle and, for some models, good fuel efficiency.

Eighty percent of motorcycle crashes result in injury or death, according to NHTSA. More than 100,000 motorcyclists have died in crashes since the enactment of the Highway Safety Act and the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1996.

One of the main reasons motorcyclists are killed in accidents is that the bike itself provides virtually no protection in a crash. Other causes include riders' lack of basic riding skills, failure to respect the motorcycle's limitations, failure to apply defensive driving techniques,

lack of braking and cornering skills, failure to follow speed limits and lack of protective gear.

"Many motorcycle deaths could be prevented if motorcyclists would take responsibility for ensuring they have done everything possible to make the ride safe by taking operator training, wearing protective gear and riding sober," according to NHTSA's Web site.

An estimated 33 percent of motorcycle operators killed in traffic crashes are improperly licensed or not licensed at all.

## Get Trained

THE Motorcycle Safety Foundation developed the comprehensive, research-based Rider Education and Training System. RETS promotes lifelong learning for motorcyclists. To find a course in your state, go to [www.msf-usa.org](http://www.msf-usa.org).



# Before You Ride

DEPARTMENT of Defense Instruction 6055.4, DOD Traffic Safety Program, mandates the following rules for motorcyclists:

- ❶ Operators of government and privately owned motorcycles on DOD installations must be appropriately licensed to operate on public highways.
- ❷ State and local laws requiring special licenses to operate motorcycles also apply to riders on DOD installations.
- ❸ Riders must successfully complete an approved rider or operator safety course. The safety course must be taught by certified or licensed instructors; and include hands-on training and a performance-based, knowledge-based evaluation.
- ❹ Helmets must properly fasten under the chin and meet Department of Transportation standards.
- ❺ Riders must wear impact or shatter-resistant goggles or a full-face shield attached to the helmet. A wind-shield or eye glasses alone are not proper protection.
- ❻ Sturdy footwear is mandatory. Leather boots or over-the-ankle shoes are strongly encouraged.
- ❼ Riders must wear long-sleeved shirts or jackets, long trousers, and full-fingered gloves or mittens designed for use on a motorcycle.
- ❽ Riders must wear brightly colored outer garments during the day and reflective garments at night. A reflective belt or vest must also be worn.

## Buying a Bike?

Consider these points when selecting a motorcycle:

- ❶ Choose your motorcycle based on a comfortable fit and functionality.
- ❷ A motorcyclist should be able to touch the ground with both feet when astride the vehicle.
- ❸ If you will be carrying a passenger, make sure the motorcycle you select has a passenger seat as well as footpegs for the passenger.
- ❹ Check the location of the controls. Make sure you can reach and operate them easily.

**Approximately 80 percent of reported motorcycle crashes result in injury or death, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.**



# Reporting Accidents

ACCIDENT reporting helps safety experts identify hazard trends and prevent similar accidents. All accidents should be reported to the local safety office and to the immediate commander or supervisor whose operation, personnel and equipment are involved. Reports should include:

- ❶ the primary cause of the accident;
- ❷ contributing factors;
- ❸ factors not contributing but increasing the severity of the damage or injuries; and
- ❹ factors not contributing but which would cause an accident in the future if left uncorrected.

Reporting instructions, forms and investigation kits are available under “Tools” at <https://safety.army.mil>. Reporting guidelines are also available in Army Regulation 385-40, “Accident Reporting and Records.”

## Lessons Learned

EFFECTIVELY managing risk is dependent, in part, on knowing what hazards exist and what controls are available to manage those hazards. Benefit from the lessons learned by other Soldiers under “Lessons Learned” at <https://safety.army.mil>. Lessons range from ground and aviation to workplace issues.





# RESOURCES



**U.S. Army Safety Center** — Gives commanders tools to integrate proactive risk management into their units' daily business. It offers training at unit locations and provides assessments — not inspections — that point out problems and suggest improvements. The center also has a comprehensive Web site with leader safety guides and risk-management tools at <https://safety.army.mil>.

Under “Tools” at the Safety Center’s Web site, users will find everything from training packages and risk-assessment worksheets to safety guides for specific locations, and the POV Risk-Management Toolbox.

A mobile training team teaches 45-hour risk-management integration courses to noncommissioned officers. The intent is to teach safety to NCOs, not produce safety NCOs.

Located at Fort Rucker, Ala., the Safety Center

offers a help desk at [helpdesk@safety.center.army.mil](mailto:helpdesk@safety.center.army.mil), or call (334) 255-1390 or (DSN) 558-1390.

**Field Manual 100-14, “Risk Management”** —

Helps leaders develop a framework to integrate risk management into planning, preparing and executing operational missions and everyday tasks.

**Army Safety Management Information System-1**—

An automated, question-and-answer tool that helps Soldiers assess potential risks for road trips. The tool is located at <https://safety.army.mil/asmsi1>.

**Flightfax and Countermeasure** — Published monthly by the Safety Center, these magazines offer helpful tips and current information about risk management.

**Installation staffs** — (including the safety office, provost marshal, and drug and alcohol abuse prevention and control office) Can provide assistance with local accident data and prevention measures.



# Making Soldiers Accountable

THE Army's accident rates have increased sharply over the last three years, with a disturbing trend emerging that suggests that certain critical standards are not being understood or enforced. To succeed in our safety goals, leaders at the strategic, operational and tactical levels must:

- Take aggressive action now;
- Target specific areas of risk;
- Hold Soldiers accountable for their actions; and
- Establish a clear, consistent message throughout formations.

**BOTTOM LINE**

*Safety is an Attitude.*